DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 469 540 PS 030 626

AUTHOR	Blum, Barbara B.; Francis, Jennifer Farnsworth
TITLE	Welfare Research Perspectives: Past, Present, and Future. A View from the Research Forum on Children, Families, and the New Federalism. 2002 Edition.
INSTITUTION	Columbia Univ., New York, NY. National Center for Children in Poverty.
SPONS AGENCY	Annie E. Casey Foundation, Baltimore, MD.; Chase Manhattan Foundations, New York, NY.; Edna McConnell Clark Foundation, New York, NY.; Russell Sage Foundation, New York, NY.; David and Lucile Packard Foundation, Los Altos, CA.; Department of Health and Human Services, Washington, DC.; Wisconsin Univ., Madison. Inst. for Research on Poverty.; George Gund Foundation, Cleveland, OH.
PUB DATE	2002-00-00
NOTE	22p.; For the 2001 edition, see ED 456 927.
AVAILABLE FROM	National Center for Children in Poverty, Mailman School of Public Health, Columbia University, 154 Haven Avenue, New York, NY 10032. Tel: 212-304-7119; Fax: 212-544-4200. For full text: http://www.nccp.org.
PUB TYPE	Reports - Descriptive (141)
EDRS PRICE	EDRS Price MF01 Plus Postage. PC Not Available from EDRS
DESCRIPTORS	Children; *Family (Sociological Unit); *Federal Legislation; Research Methodology; *Research Needs; Research Problems; *Welfare Recipients; *Welfare Reform; Well Being
IDENTIFIERS	*Personal Responsibility and Work Opp Recon Act; *Reauthorization Legislation

ABSTRACT

This working paper is the fourth in a series examining what has been learned since the enactment of the Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act (PRWORA) of 1996. Following an introduction describing the legislation's initial impact, the paper details reauthorization-related activities during 2001 and 2002, and describes provisions of the House reauthorization proposal reflecting President George W. Bush's emphasis on child well-being and on marriage, and the Senate reauthorization bill proposing increasing work participation rates up to 70 percent. The paper further describes recently awarded grants and outlines key areas remaining to be addressed. A matrix showing research findings relevant to the provisions proposed in the Senate and the House bills highlights: (1) PRWORA goals; (2) TANF requirements; (3) populations affected; and (4) administrative issues. The paper notes that there are solid findings regarding employment, income, and welfare receipt, and emerging findings regarding child well-being, but no evidence about the feasibility of achieving 70 percent participation rates nor credible research on how to encourage and support healthy marriages. Progress in addressing research methodology problems is outlined. The paper concludes by asserting that policymakers need to apply what has already been learned as the welfare programs are reshaped and that future efforts need to focus on identifying the developmental impact on children, understanding how to make government systems work more efficiently, studying issues related to family formation and marriage, and giving priority to particular populations such as

Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made
from the original document.

immigrants and the developmentally disabled. Two appendices describe the research base for this paper and list the projects in the Research Forum database. (KB)

Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made
from the original document.

ED 469 540

A View from the

RESEARCH FORUM ON CHILDREN, FAMILIES, AND THE NEW FEDERALISM

Welfare Research Perspectives

Past, Present, and Future

2002 Edition

Barbara B. Blum
Jennifer Farnsworth Francis

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Office of Educational Research and Improvement
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

X This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.

☐ Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.

• Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official OERI position or policy.

PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE AND DISSEMINATE THIS MATERIAL IN MICROFICHE ONLY HAS BEEN GRANTED BY

Elizabeth Siecke

TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

2B

NATIONAL CENTER
FOR CHILDREN IN POVERTY
Mailman School of Public Health
Columbia University

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

PS 030626

Research Forum on Children, Families, and the New Federalism

The Research Forum on Children, Families, and the New Federalism, an initiative of the National Center for Children in Poverty, was founded in January 1997, and has been supported by the Annie E. Casey, Chase Manhattan, Edna McConnell Clark, Russell Sage, George Gund, and David and Lucile Packard Foundations and also by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services and the Institute for Research on Poverty, University of Wisconsin-Madison. The Research Forum is committed to encouraging rigorous study of issues and interventions affecting poor families; to promoting collaborative work among and between researchers, policymakers, and practitioners; and to facilitating access to information that can inform policy and practice.

Research Forum Advisors

J. Lawrence Aber *National Center for Children in Poverty*
Thomas Corbett *Institute for Research on Poverty*
Deborah Phillips *Georgetown University*
Howard Rolston *Administration for Children and Families, DHHS*
Ann Segal *Consultant*
Barry L. Van Lare *Welfare Information Network*

Research Forum Staff

Barbara B. Blum *Director*
Jennifer Farnsworth Francis *Research Associate*
Sharmila Lawrence *Project Coordinator*
Julie Alperen *Graduate Research Assistant*
Brenda Hureau *Administrative Assistant*
Carole J. Oshinsky *Managing Editor, National Center for Children in Poverty*

Copyright © 2002 by the National Center for Children in Poverty

Introduction

This is the fourth in a series of working papers designed to examine what has been learned since the enactment of the Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act (PRWORA) of 1996 (which is effective until September 30, 2002). PRWORA ended Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC), the federal entitlement to assistance for eligible needy families with children, and created the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) block grant. The goals of TANF are to:

- Provide support to poor families so that children may be cared for in their own homes or in the homes of relatives.
- Promote job preparation, work, and marriage in order to reduce families' receipt of government benefits.
- Prevent and reduce the incidence of nonmarital pregnancies.
- Encourage the formation and maintenance of two-parent families.

Under the 1996 law, states have been allowed greater flexibility in the design and implementation of their welfare programs, but have been required to impose work requirements and enforce a five-year limit on the receipt of federal assistance. PRWORA has made available $16.8 billion to states each year to help them achieve TANF goals.

As the first working paper in the series published in August 1999 indicated, welfare policies in the United States have changed profoundly since the passage of PRWORA. Foremost among the effects of these changes is the dramatic reduction in the number of individuals participating in the TANF program. By 1999, fewer than 2.5 million families were receiving cash assistance from TANF, a reduction of 51 percent from the caseload of more than five million families receiving AFDC in 1994. In 2000, the caseload continued to decline to 2.18 million families. By December 2001, rates of caseload declines had diminished, and total coverage was provided to 2.1 million families. Changes in the caseload came from movement into the workforce, departures due to sanctions or time limits, and reduced entries reflecting diversion programs as well as participants' reluctance to conform to TANF mandates, particularly the work requirements. Starting in the mid-1990s, a strong economy and new state waiver programs had already stimulated declining enrollment in AFDC. PRWORA's requirements, plus continued economic strength, sustained these earlier trends. The softening economy of the past year has affected the trend.

While recent figures published by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services in May 2002 showed no increase in the overall TANF caseload between October and December 2001, the caseload did in fact increase from July to December 2001, and most states have experienced increases. These increases are masked in nationwide totals by noninclusion of cases receiving state cash assistance (e.g., New York, California, and Michigan) as they exit TANF due to time limits. These cases are counted as reductions in the TANF caseload; they are, however, still dependent on public assistance, albeit state-financed public assistance.

Caseload reductions of a somewhat lesser but still significant magnitude have been experienced in the Medicaid and Food Stamp programs since PRWORA's implementation. TANF participants and many TANF "leavers"—those individuals who have left or been diverted from the program—are still eligible for these benefits. However, participation in both the Medicaid and Food Stamp programs has been reduced, due to changes in immigrant eligibility under TANF and problems administering TANF. Many individuals are not informed that they can apply for these benefits regardless of their TANF status. Although PRWORA legislation was responsible for many caseload reductions, changes in immigration law, Supplemental Security Income (SSI) benefits, and health programs have affected TANF recipients as well as low-income working families.

Cash assistance and Medicaid reductions produced substantial fiscal surpluses for most states, providing an opportunity to support resources for new initiatives that advance the objectives of PRWORA. Of the $17.1 billion available in total funds in fiscal year (FY) 2001, only $2.6 billion remained unobligated, and some states are spending in excess of their TANF appropriations and Maintenance of Effort (MOE) requirements. The Center on Budget and Policy Priorities reported that in FY 2001, 27 states and the District of Columbia used unspent TANF funds from prior years to finance their TANF expenditures. Now, with state deficits increasing as tax and other revenues are reduced, providing cash assistance to a growing caseload could become problematic, especially in states where TANF funds were used to supplant state funds.

PRWORA Reauthorization Activities

Since reauthorization of PRWORA welfare provisions is required before September 30, 2002, many organizations and individuals began during 2001 to identify and examine issues likely to be debated and/or to influence the legislative process. In some instances, regular meetings had already been convened by organizations in the prior year, but the frequency and volume of meeting activity increased dramatically from fall 2001 through spring 2002.

The Brookings Institution, through its Welfare Reform and Beyond initiative, convened over 20 meetings at which specific topics were examined by scholars and policymakers. The Welfare Information Network (WIN) held monthly meetings with representatives of organizations such as the National Governors' Association, the National Conference of State Legislators, the National Association of Counties, and the American Public Human Services Association to share information and concerns about reauthorization, and with the Research Forum, sponsored quarterly meetings to review research relevant to the reauthorization process. The Center on Law and Social Policy scheduled teleconference meetings that attracted large numbers of participants, and the Urban Institute hosted roundtables and "First Tuesday" meetings. Other conferences were hosted by the National Association of Welfare Researchers, the Joint Center for Poverty Research, the David and Lucile Packard Foundation, Midwest Partners, the University of Michigan, the

Ford Foundation, and the Research Forum. In addition, sessions of the Grantmakers' Income Security Taskforce were devoted to examining evidence emerging that could inform the reauthorization process.

The volume of publications also increased. Some presented recent findings from studies begun before and after the passage of PRWORA. Others have been based on secondary analyses of earlier studies. Some 103 publications were entered in the Research Forum's database subsequent to the third working paper released in summer 2001 (see Appendix). Many of these publications presented research findings of great importance to new welfare legislation. Welfare, Children, and Families: A Three-City Study has produced information not only about TANF participants but also about users of noncash assistance and former users of cash assistance; its findings about the effects of sanctions and about families and children in the three communities are enlightening. The Urban Change project has produced findings related to a variety of issues, including food insecurity among both welfare leavers and stayers, administrative problems related to post-TANF Food Stamp and Medicaid receipt, responses of social service organizations to changes in welfare policy, health of low-income women, and experiences of working TANF leavers.

The Women's Employment Study at the University of Michigan has findings from its third wave of surveys which further document ways in which barriers interact to impede movement into and/or retention in the work force. The Fragile Families study continues to produce information related to marriage and family formation. In addition, syntheses have been developed to present findings from multiple studies examining single issues or single sites. These include:

- Project on State-Level Child Outcomes
- Synthesis of ASPE "Leaver" Studies
- MDRC's Next Generation Project
- MDRC's Cross-State Study of Time-Limited Welfare
- RAND TANF Synthesis Project

With all this activity, Research Forum staff worked to refine and update the "Key Topic" pages instituted in 2001. These pages are designed to highlight important findings by topic and to guide policymakers, practitioners, and advocates to studies of particular relevance. The topics include:

- General Overview
- Reauthorization
- Welfare Caseload Characteristics
- Food Stamps Caseload Characteristics
- Medicaid Caseload Characteristics
- Financial Incentives
- Work Requirements
- Sanctions
- Time Limits
- Job Retention
- Welfare-to-Work
- Child Outcomes
- Child Welfare

- Child Support
- Child Care
- Marriage
- Out-of-Wedlock Births
- Fatherhood
- Immigrants
- Rural Populations
- Housing
- Transportation

During spring 2002, legislative staff began to schedule discussions in both the U.S. House of Representatives and the U.S. Senate.

On May 13, 2002, the White House announced the Bush Administration's reauthorization proposal. Eight reauthorization bills were proposed in the House and three in the Senate. On May 16, the House of Representatives passed H.R. 4737, which largely reflects the President's proposal. That proposal cites four goals that place new emphasis on child well-being and on marriage. It increases hours of work required and participation; retains time limits; continues current funding levels; replaces the high performance bonus with a bonus to reward employment achievement; replaces the illegitimacy reduction bonus with marriage promotion grants; requires self-sufficiency plans and universal engagement; and authorizes state and local waivers for coordinating multiple public assistance, work force development, and other programs.

On June 26, the Senate Finance Committee marked up the Work, Opportunity, and Responsibility for Kids Act of 2002. The Senate bill provides level funding for the TANF block grant; an increase in child care funding by $5.5 billion over five years; universal engagement for all possible TANF recipients in work or work-related activities; an increase in work participation rates by 5 percent a year up to 70 percent; replacement of the caseload reduction credit with an employment credit; and maintenance of the 30 hour per week requirement for work activities (24 of which must be in primary work activities). It also calls for an expanded definition of work; $200 million a year for marriage promotion activities; financial incentives for states to pass through more child support to families; and funding for home infant care demonstration projects in five states. In addition, the Senate bill allows states the option of restoring TANF and health care benefits to all legal immigrants. A side-by-side comparison of all the bills proposed was developed by the Center on Budget and Policy Priorities (CBPP) and the Center for Law and Social Policy (CLASP) and can be viewed on the CLASP Web site (www.clasp.org).

Drawing on the Key Topics findings, the Research Forum has developed a matrix showing research findings relevant to the provisions proposed in the Senate and House bills. While there are solid findings regarding employment, income, and welfare receipt, and emerging findings on child well-being, it is important to note that no evidence exists about either the feasibility of achieving 70 percent participation rates and the expanded requirements for hours of work proposed in the House bill; nor is there credible research on how to encourage and support healthy marriages.

Research Relevant to TANF Reauthorization

As the Research Forum database documents, an extensive set of studies have produced findings that should inform the reauthorization process. Beginning with the results of the Supported Work experiment in the early 1980s and strengthened by the impacts measured by the welfare-to-work experiments implemented in the 1980s, solid evidence about the effects of work on welfare receipt, employment, and income became available.

Following these seminal experiments, the waiver experiments of the 1990s began to examine a range of interventions including time limits, sanctions, and family caps, in addition to work requirements. These waiver studies also provided an opportunity to evaluate child outcomes in five of the waiver states. Findings from the waiver studies have produced an impressive trove of information for practitioners and policymakers.

More recent studies, including the Welfare, Children, and Families Three-City Study, the Urban Change Project, the Fragile Families and Child Well-being Study, the Women's Employment Study, and the State Capacity Study, are producing very pertinent data about the status of low-income families, the effects of sanctions, the barriers which TANF participants face, and the systemic issues which affect implementation of PRWORA objectives. Currently, findings are also emerging from U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS)-funded studies on job retention and on rural and tribal issues.

Recently awarded grants by HHS include:

- **Demonstration and Evaluation of Enhanced Services for the Hard-to-Employ.** The Administration for Children and Families (ACF) and the Office of the Assistant Secretary for Planning and Evaluation (ASPE) are supporting a multi-site evaluation of programs working with hard-to-employ low-income parents in order to identify effective strategies for promoting employment and family well-being and to determine the effects of such programs on employment, earnings, income, welfare dependence, family functioning, and the well-being of children.
- **Measures of Material Hardship.** The purpose of this project is to advance understanding of the value and limitations of measures of material hardship as a component of family well-being. The contractor, Abt Associates, will be responsible for convening a working meeting on measuring material hardship, commissioning papers on various aspects of material hardship measures, and producing a final report summarizing the one-day meeting and options for further steps.
- **Researcher-Initiated Grants on Welfare Outcomes.** Continuing this grant program in FY 2001, HHS awarded 11 grants in support of policy-relevant research to broaden understanding of welfare reform outcomes. The issues being addressed under the grants include barriers to service delivery—particularly for special populations, family formation, child and youth outcomes, maternal employment, the low-wage labor market, family economic security, measurement of welfare utilization, and effects of TANF time limits.

- **State Studies of the TANF Caseload.** This project funds five states—California, Colorado, Maryland, Missouri, and South Carolina—and the District of Columbia to study the characteristics of their TANF caseloads. Particular attention will be given to the personal, family, and community factors that may present barriers to employment.
- **Small Grant Program on Use of HHS-Sponsored Data Sets.** Over a dozen new HHS-sponsored administrative and survey databases have recently become available for researcher use. Secondary analyses of new databases will increase understanding of the outcomes of welfare reform. These databases include data from the ASPE-supported National Evaluation of Welfare-to-Work Strategies (NEWWS), as well as state and local welfare leaver studies. In this project, HHS is working with the Institute for Research on Poverty at the University of Wisconsin to provide dissertation grants to young scholars to explore aspects of welfare reform using the HHS-sponsored data sets. The grants also will build capacity by encouraging younger scholars to undertake welfare-related research.

Unmet Welfare Research Needs

Research priorities for the future can be divided into three categories: administrative; programmatic; and population-specific. Administrative research needs to include: (1) building systems using advanced information technology; (2) studying implementation in order to improve service delivery; and (3) refining capacity to monitor allocation of funds.

- **Building Systems.** The information technology (IT) currently available is capable of linking income security, food stamps, child care, transportation, housing, and other data. However, IT capacity is used in only a limited number of localities. Both the U.S. General Accounting Office (GAO) and Rockefeller Institute have made solid recommendations that can advance a coherent research strategy.
- **Studying Implementation.** The pathway to implementation between policymaking and service delivery is frequently difficult. An investment in examining the reasons for serious service delivery flaws and disconnects among programs is needed to ensure that resources are better utilized.
- **Refining Fiscal Monitoring.** Currently, understanding how funds are being used is very difficult. Part of the problem relates to inadequate information technology. However, as the populations served become more diffuse, credible monitoring of expenditures is essential.

Program-related research needs to include studies on extended work requirements, sanction effects, time limits, marriage and family formation, and child well-being.

- **Extended Work Requirements.** Some proposals for reauthorization are mandating hours of work in excess of the current 30 hours per week. Research to assess and monitor performance of this mandate is important and should focus on effects related to the adult participant as well as on his or her children.

- **Sanctions.** This intervention has been neglected in past research. Since those sanctioned in all probability include individuals with many barriers to work, understanding more about sanctioned individuals and the effects of sanctions is critically important.

- **Time Limits.** Time limits have just become effective in a number of states. Since the economy is not as robust as in earlier years, understanding the effects of time limits should have priority, especially on those who left TANF earlier and can no longer return.

- **Marriage and Family Formation.** Evaluations of incentives directed toward encouraging marriage and affecting family formation are very much needed. Little research exists on these topics.

- **Child Well-Being.** Child well-being has been cited as a Bush Administration priority. A mobilized and carefully crafted initiative to collect timely data about the status of all children, not only those who are low-income, is needed; ideally this initiative would draw from existing datasets.

Specific populations have needs that require special interventions. Research findings on rural, tribal, and urban populations are emerging; so too, is information on children. Still, more is needed on children as well as immigrants, nonentrants and leavers, and the hard-to-serve.

- **Children.** Much more information is needed on the status of infants and toddlers and adolescents, particularly in light of recent research that suggests some negative effects of welfare reform on youth. In addition, research is needed to improve knowledge about child-only cases (in which only the child receives benefits because caretakers are ineligible due to immigrant status, SSI receipt, or nonparent status) and about the child welfare nexus to welfare.

- **Immigrants.** This burgeoning population has since PRWORA been disconnected from most public benefits. Since children in immigrant families account for 20 percent of all children in the nation, and since they are dependent on their adult immigrant parents, research on the status of immigrants (adult and child) should be expanded.

- **Nonentrants and Leavers.** These populations are less connected to benefit programs and difficult to study. Nevertheless, learning more about those who have not entered the income security program and about those who have exited would provide important insights for policymakers.

- **Hard-to-Serve.** Demonstrations to test models for serving those with multiple difficulties can guide policymakers and practitioners toward creating new and productive programs. The HHS-funded study by MDRC is an important step.

What Welfare Research Tells Us for Reauthorizing TANF

The rigorous research on the impact of welfare reform across the United States provides many guidelines for the current debate on how to reauthorize TANF. The following chart provides a summary of the research findings on the purposes of welfare reform, specific TANF provisions, effects on particularly vulnerable populations, and administrative issues that should help inform the reauthorization debate and help guide future research .

REAUTHORIZATION ISSUE	RELATED RESEARCH EVIDENCE
Goals of PRWORA	
• Provide support to poor families so that children may be cared for in their own homes or in the homes of relatives; • Promote job preparation, work, and marriage in order to reduce families' receipt of government benefits; • Prevent and reduce the incidence of nonmarital pregnancies; • Encourage the formation and maintenance of two-parent families.	• **Support for children.** Assistance is provided to children in caseloads meeting TANF requirements. However, a large number of children in immigrant families are not provided with assistance, even when eligible. While no significant increases in foster care placement have been documented, child-only cases are becoming a larger proportion of the shrinking welfare caseload. But child poverty rates do continue to decline. • **Dependence on public benefits.** Solid evidence exists that as caseloads relying on public assistance (such as TANF, Food Stamps) have decreased dramatically, reductions in benefit expenditures have mirrored these caseload reductions. Increases in numbers of workers employed (even with recent declines reflecting a recession) substantiate the movement of welfare recipients off the rolls of cash assistance and into regular employment. • **Teenage issues.** A reduction in teen birth rates (that began prior to 1996) continues. Data concerning living arrangements and school attendance for adolescent parents is not sufficiently available to draw further conclusions. • **Marriage.** While increased marriage rates are not significant, slight decreases in divorce rates continue (this trend began before 1996). In addition, small reductions in the number of households headed by a single parent are emerging. With regard to family formation, however, there is conflicting evidence about the impact of the Family Cap provisions of PRWORA.
TANF Requirements	
Work Requirements Within 24 months, work is required for TANF clients receiving assistance: • States are required to ensure participation rates of 50 percent as of fiscal year 2002, subject to a formula recognizing caseload reductions; • Single-parents are required to work for 30 hours per week. • Up to 20 percent of participants can be exempted from these requirements.	• Increased participation in the work force has been documented in numerous studies. Uniformly, studies indicate that most individuals leaving TANF for employment are in low-wage jobs. Studies of "leavers" also show that those with limited education and/or other problems are most likely to return to the TANF caseload. • Work participation rates of TANF clients will be a major subject of the reauthorization debate. The present requirement of 50 percent is discounted by caseload reductions that reduce state benchmarks. Currently, because of drastic caseload reductions, some states have very minimal participation requirements. Hours worked by TANF participants who remain on the rolls tend to be less than full-time. Studies indicate that the earned income disregard provision is extraordinarily important for these workers. • For other workers who are full-time and no longer TANF clients, the federal Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC) plays a similarly important role. However, unemployment insurance policies have not been adapted to accommodate low-wage workers.
Time Limits A maximum of five years of federal assistance may be provided. States may shorten this period of eligibility.	• Research studies show some problematic findings with regard to time limits. Early in TANF implementation, considerable confusion existed about time limits both for participants and staff. More recent studies indicate negative effects on working families cut off from TANF income supplements. • Some child outcomes are also negatively affected.
Sanctions For individuals not meeting the work requirements, full or partial sanctions may be imposed.	• Uniformly, the numerous research findings in this area show that sanctioned families are seriously at risk. These families tend to be cases where the parent may be poorly equipped (due to mental illness, developmental disability, or substance abuse) to comply with TANF requirements. Clearly, children in these cases are affected.

REAUTHORIZATION ISSUE	RELATED RESEARCH EVIDENCE
Populations Affected	
Children	• Several studies have substantiated that while most children have not been harmed by the changes in welfare policy, children in households where income is supplemented when work is mandated show improved outcomes. • Solid evidence documents increased investment in child care using TANF funds as well as Child Care and Development Block Grant (CCBG) funds. It is less clear whether the increase has been adequate to meet increased needs. • The State Child Health Insurance Program (SCHIP) has increased access to health care for poor children; enhanced Child Support Enforcement provisions have provided additional income to significant numbers of families with dependent children. • Research on child outcomes highlights several areas for further study, in particular: (1) child-only cases; (2) the effects of work requirements for parents of adolescents; (3) the effects of work requirements on infants and toddlers; and (4) the role of after-school programs on behavioral/cognitive measures.
Immigrant Populations	• Immigrant populations are understudied. What has been learned indicates that children in these families need a range of interventions. • As a result of welfare reform, parents' lack of United States citizenship has become a potential risk factor for children in immigrant families. • Policies need to be administered to ensure eligible children have access to benefits.
Disabled Individuals	• Parents and children in families with a disabled individual may require assistance. • Parents may be mentally ill, developmentally disabled, physically disabled, or substance abusers. • Children may be developmentally disabled, emotionally disturbed, or physically ill.
Native Americans	• Emerging findings from tribal welfare-to-work program evaluations point to some challenges regarding coordination between state agencies and tribal welfare-to-work programs. • Education and training components may be needed to supplement the Work-First approach. • Tribal welfare-to-work programs, if implemented successfully, have been found to support the economic development of tribes.
Rural Populations	• Rural welfare recipient populations are more likely to be employed, to be married, and to be non-Hispanic white than recipients in urban areas. • Rural welfare leavers face mixed employment prospects, may receive lower incomes, and have greater problems with transportation than their urban counterparts.
Urban Populations	• Because cities are responsible for the largest proportion of the welfare caseload, they have special problems, including lack of affordable housing, greater costs of living, and higher crime rates. • Research indicates that these issues, plus barriers to employment, such as inability to access metropolitan job markets and lack of education, may contribute to slower caseload declines in urban areas.
Administrative Issues	
These include issues related to funding, flexibility, management information systems (MIS) and information technology, and implementation.	• PRWORA funding has been used creatively. After a slow uptake, TANF funds have, for the most part, been well used. Of particular note is the use of TANF funds to expand child care. • Flexibility is essential in bringing continuing change to address social welfare issues. • MIS and information technology are being underutilized. In order to advance a new social welfare agenda, far more information needs to be collected and shared across domains. • Research findings on implementation issues need to be incorporated in planning for the next generation of changes in social policy.

Research Methodology Issues

Relevance of Studies. While there has been improvement in researchers' connections to administrations, practitioners, and advocates, policy questions rather than practical needs continue to drive the research agenda. The questions addressed are often "yesterday's" questions or at best "today's" because persons "on the ground" (i.e., the practitioners and advocates) are most likely to identify problems early on—yet their input is not frequently used to develop research questions. Two examples are: (1) the relative paucity of implementation research; and (2) the slowness to address housing issues and their effect on low-income families.

Importance of Implementation Studies. An emphasis on implementation research is warranted. Many of the disconnects in programs that are crucial to the functioning of low-income families need to be carefully studied so that remedies can be suggested. In addition, strong implementation studies enrich and inform impact studies. More academic emphasis on implementation and process is required to train the next generation of researchers.

Synthesis and Dissemination. During the past year activities in these two areas have been drastically improved. With the volume of findings and secondary analyses currently underway, these activities need to continue and be enhanced. Advocates and legislators in particular plead for more succinct and user-friendly information. This is a challenge, given the complexities of the research findings. But only by meeting that challenge will research findings be applied to policy and practice.

Large-Scale, Multi-Site Experiments. Certain critical questions require experimentation. One such question is how to support low-income families. Another is how to engage and support very vulnerable families—families in which a member is physically or mentally disabled and/or in need of substance abuse treatment. At this point in the welfare saga, carefully crafted experiments are needed to test what may work.

Use of Well-Tested Assessment and Survey Instruments. Great progress has been made in developing assessment and survey instruments that have been carefully tested. Future studies should draw upon these instruments to the maximum extent possible, thereby creating consistency and compatibility across studies.

Conclusion

A wealth of information about low-income families has developed since the passage of PRWORA in 1996. The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services and in particular the Administration for Children and Families and the Assistant Secretary for Planning and Evaluation are to be commended for their carefully crafted research agendas, as are a number of foundations who have played key roles in supporting many of the studies cited in this working paper. It is important to recognize how much the knowledge base has advanced during the past decade.

Yet there is still much to learn. Almost every finding raises new questions. But first, policymakers need to apply what has already been learned as the welfare programs are reshaped. Understanding the needs of low-income workers and responding to the barriers faced by more vulnerable individuals is a challenge—one that policymakers and practitioners are better equipped to address as a result of existing research findings. For the future, researchers, policymakers, advocates, and practitioners need to:

- Learn more about developmental effects for children of parents receiving assistance or in low-income jobs.
- Understand how to make government systems work more efficiently and how to measure their effectiveness and maximize funding.
- Study issues related to family formation and marriage.
- Give priority to studying interventions for particular populations, especially immigrants, the developmentally disabled, the mentally ill, and substance abusers.

A coherent, carefully focused research agenda based on these elements can produce the next generation of knowledge to help policymakers craft and refine the programs and systems that work best to promote child well-being and family economic security.

APPENDIX A

Monitoring and Supporting Welfare Research

Information for this working paper is drawn from an interactive Web-based database (www.researchforum.org) created by staff at the Research Forum on Children, Families, and the New Federalism that became operational in October 1997. In the database, larger, multi-site studies that meet preestablished criteria and whose summary descriptions have been reviewed by a principal investigator are categorized as reviewed projects. Smaller, single site projects are categorized as unreviewed. Icons are used to indicate an income security focus, a family/child focus, a community focus, or a joint focus. In addition, a set of studies (both reviewed and unreviewed) are categorized as policy analysis projects.

Volume and Distribution of TANF Research Projects

The geographical distribution of active research projects in the Research Forum database roughly correlates with TANF caseloads. Of the projects in the database in July 2002, 80 include California as a study site. Florida, Illinois, Massachusetts, Michigan, New York, Ohio, Pennsylvania, Texas, and Wisconsin also have a high volume of research activity. Fewer research projects are being conducted in states that are smaller or have fewer TANF recipients. For instance, there are only 19 welfare reform studies in Alaska or Hawaii.

Of the 253 projects in the database, 211 study issues related to income security; of these, 40 projects include analyses of child and family effects, and 20 include analyses of community effects. Final findings exist for 84 of these evaluations; 81 have interim findings; 46 have no findings yet.

A subset of evaluations (some of which are embedded within income security or community evaluations) is focused on child and family outcomes. Some 28 of these evaluations have final findings; 26 have interim findings; 33 have no findings yet.

Another subset of evaluations (some of which are embedded within income security or child/family evaluations) is focused on community issues. To date, 10 of these evaluations have final findings; 8 have interim findings; 8 have no findings yet.

The database includes 65 policy studies; 28 have been completed and 37 are on-going.

The "Key Topics" pages of the Research Forum's Web site (www.researchforum.org/cfm/keytopics.cfm) summarizes findings from income security studies that address the effects of time limits, sanctions, and work requirements, and the impacts of financial incentives, welfare-to-work strategies, and job retention strategies. These pages also contain summaries of findings from child and family research studies that measure child outcomes related to state welfare programs and others focused on child care, child welfare, and child support issues. The pages also focus on populations of special interest, including food stamp leavers, immigrants, rural populations, and tribal groups. In addition, the pages summa-

rize findings from community studies that examine issues such as housing and transportation—two critically important elements for welfare-to-work and employment retention programs. A matrix (available on the Forum Web site: http://www.researchforum.org/newsletter/researchevidence.doc) has been developed to summarize existing research evidence related to proposed reauthorization recommendations.

Federally Sponsored Research on Specific Groups

In the last two years, several federal agencies launched research projects to measure the effects of welfare reform on different populations. These projects were designed to complement existing studies and further enhance the knowledge base. The Administration for Children and Families (ACF) and the Assistant Secretary for Planning and Evaluation (ASPE), U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS), are responsible for coordinating the implementation of PRWORA. These agencies initiated a series of studies that are clustered around specific topics and populations relevant to welfare reform. To facilitate comparisons of findings across sites, the projects attempt to employ similar research questions and data collection methods. The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA), Department of Labor (DOL), and Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), and other federal agencies have also been engaged in research activities. Funding for many of the projects is drawn from the $5 million provided by Congress in 1998 to study welfare reform. States, localities, and private foundations are providing additional resources for these studies, as well.

Research Forum Web Site Projects

The Research Forum's Web-based database contains descriptions of the 253 projects that are listed at the end of this report; 63 are reviewed and 190 are unreviewed.

Publications

The projects listed above have produced 775 publications in the last several years; 103 of them since August 2001, when the third edition of the Research Forum working paper was published. Approximately 115 additional reports are scheduled to be published in the coming year. In most instances, these published reports can be downloaded from the Web site of the sponsoring organization or by contacting the organization via e-mail.

APPENDIX B

Projects in the Research Forum Database

Summaries including contact information for the following projects may be found at: www.researchforum.org/cfm/titles.cfm?id=*.

Reviewed Projects

A Better Chance (ABC) Evaluation

Alabama ASSETS Demonstration

Arizona EMPOWER Welfare Reform Demonstration

Assessing the New Federalism: National Survey of America's Families

Assessing the New Federalism: Policy Analysis Project

Big Cities Confront the New Politics of Child and Family Policy

Building Bridges: States Respond to Substance Abuse and Welfare Reform

Canada's Self-Sufficiency Project (SSP) Evaluation

Canada's Earnings Supplement Project (ESP) Evaluation

CASAWORKS for Families

Cleveland Community Building Initiative (CCBI)

Confronting the New Politics of Child and Family Policy in the U.S.

Connecticut's Jobs First: Welfare Reform Evaluation Project

Cuyahoga County Early Childhood Initiative

Devolution, Welfare Reform, and Wellbeing Study: New York Social Indicators Survey

Evaluation of the Arizona WORKs Pilot Program

Evaluation of the Tribal Welfare-to-Work Grants Program

Examination of State Diversion Programs and Activities under TANF

Explaining Recent Trends in Food Stamp Program Caseloads

Faces of Change: Welfare Reform in America

Florida Family Transition Program (FTP) Evaluation

Foster Youth Transitions to Adulthood

Fragile Families and Child Wellbeing Study

Front-Line Management and Practice Study

GAIN Evaluation

Gaining Ground? Measuring the Impact of America's Welfare Revolution

GAPS Initiative

Growing Up in Poverty Project

Indiana Welfare Reform Evaluation

Infant Health and Development Program

Iowa Family Investment Program (FIP) Evaluation

Iowa's Limited Benefit Plan (LBP) Evaluation

JOBS-PLUS Community Revitalization Initiative for Public Housing Families

LEAP Evaluation

Los Angeles Family and Neighborhood Study (LAFANS)

Minnesota's Family Investment Program (MFIP) Evaluation

Monitoring Child and Family Social Program Outcomes: Before and After Welfare Reform in Four States

Monitoring States' Welfare Reforms

Moving to Opportunity for Fair Housing Demonstration Program

National Evaluation of the Comprehensive Child Development Program

National Evaluation of Welfare-to-Work Strategies (formerly JOBS)

National Survey of Child and Adolescent Well-Being (NSCAW)

Neighborhood Jobs Initiative

New Chance Demonstration

New Hope Project

New York Child Assistance Program (NY CAP) Evaluation

NICHD Study of Early Child Care and Youth Development

North Dakota Training, Education, Employment, and Management (TEEM) Project Evaluation

Parents' Fair Share Demonstration

Postemployment Services Demonstration

Prenatal and Infancy Home Visitation by Nurses

Preschool Immunization Project Evaluation

Project on Devolution and Urban Change

Rural Welfare-to-Work Strategies Project

State Capacity Study

State Policy Documentation Project

Teenage Parent Demonstration Program

Three States' Approaches Show Promise of Increasing Work Participation

To Strengthen Michigan's Families (TSMF) Evaluation

Vermont Welfare Restructuring Project Evaluation

Welfare Reform: States' Early Experiences with Benefit Termination

Welfare, Children, and Families: A Three-City Study

Women's Employment Study

Unreviewed Projects

A Process Study of Iowa's Post-Employment Pilot Project

Alameda County CalWORKs Needs Assessment

Analysis of Missouri Workforce Development System "Program Leavers"

Arizona TANF Cash Exit Study

Arkansas Transitional Employment Assistance (TEA) Program

Assessing Effective Welfare-to-Work Strategies for Domestic Violence Victims and Survivors in the Options/Opciones Project

Assessing Enhanced Transitional Employment (ETE) Programs

Assessing the Effects of Welfare Reform on California's Most Precarious Families

Assessing the Family Circumstances of Current and Former TANF Child-Only Cases in San Mateo and Santa Clara Counties

Bridges to Work Demonstration

Broken Promise: Welfare Reform Two Years Later

Budgetary and Spending Implications of a Food Stamp Outreach Program

California Child Welfare Waiver Demonstration

California Works Opportunity and Responsibility to Kids (CalWORKs) Program Statewide Evaluation

California: Welfare Reform's Impact on Legal Immigrants' Access to Health Care

CalWORKs Project

Carolina Abecederian Project

Chicago Longitudinal Study

Child Support and Data Analysis Project

Child Welfare in a CalWORKs Environment

Child Well-Being Effects of Welfare Reform

Children's Sentinel Nutrition Assessment Program (C-SNAP)

Colorado Child Welfare Managed Care Study

Colorado Child Welfare Waiver Project

Colorado Works Evaluation

Comparing Recent Declines in Oregon's Cash Assistance Caseload with Trends in the Poverty Population

Comprehensive Evaluation of Welfare Reform in New York State

Connecticut Child Welfare Waiver Demonstration

Contra Costa and Alameda Counties (CA) "Leavers" Project

Converting to Wisconsin Works: Where Did Families Go When AFDC Ended in Milwaukee

Cuyahoga County Post-TANF Tracking Project

Delaware Child Welfare Waiver Demonstration

District of Columbia "Leavers" Project

District of Columbia Child Welfare Waiver Project

Early Head Start Research and Evaluation Project

Effects of Welfare Reform on Housing Assistance Recipients

Effects of Welfare Reform on Special Populations

Effects of Welfare-to-Work Programs in Illinois

Employment Retention and Advancement (ERA) Project

Employment Retention Project

Enhanced Services for the Hard-to-Employ Demonstration and Evaluation Project

Evaluating CalWORKs in Los Angeles County

Evaluation of Child Care Subsidy Strategies

Evaluation of Outcomes for the AFDC/TANF and FUTURES Populations: 1993-1998

Evaluation of SonomaWORKs

Evaluation of the North Carolina Work First Program

Evaluation of Washington State's Welfare Reform

Examining the Impact of Welfare Reform on Medi-Cal

Examining the Influence of Welfare Reform on Unmarried Teen Birthrates in Texas

Exiting Welfare: The Experiences of Families in Metro New Orleans

Expanding Medicaid Enrollment Using Tax Data

Family Income Study

Family Preservation and Reunification Program Evaluation

Family Well-Being and Welfare Reform in Iowa

Federal Funding Impact Study

Fifty-State Survey of Teen Pregnancy Prevention

Finding Common Ground in the Era of Welfare Reform

Florida Child Welfare Waiver Project

Food Stamp Leavers in Illinois

Food Stamp Leavers in South Carolina

From Welfare to Jobs and Independence

Georgia Welfare Reform Impact Assessment

Grandparents as Primary Caregivers for TANF Children

Health and Well-Being in Oklahoma: A Long-Term Analysis

Health Effects of Welfare Reform on Children with Chronic Illness

Heron Valley: Poverty, Parenting, and Social Change in a Small, Rural Community

Homeless Family Profile Survey

Illegal Aliens: Extent of Welfare Benefits Received on Behalf of U.S. Citizen Children

Illinois Child Welfare Waiver Demonstration

Illinois Child Welfare Waiver Project – Services to Substance-Abusing Caretakers

Illinois Families Study

Illinois' Study of Former TANF Clients

Illinois TANF Applicant Study

Illinois Youth Employment and Training Initiative

Immigrant Women and Welfare Project

Impact of Child Reform on Child Welfare

Impact of Welfare Reform on Families

Impact of Welfare Reform on Social Services Agencies in New York City

Impact of Welfare Reform on Women Leaving TANF in Georgia

Impact Study of the New Hampshire Employment Program

Implementing Welfare Reform Requirements for Teenage Parents: Lessons from Experience in Four States

Implementing Welfare to Work in Michigan

Implications for the Design of Federal Time Limit Rules: Who Will Hit TANF Time Limits in California

Implications of the Welfare Reform Law on Suburban Chicago Transit Demand

Improving State Capacity to Address the Needs of Low-Income Working Families

Indiana Child Welfare Waiver Demonstration

Iowa "Leavers" Project

Kansas Child Welfare Waiver Demonstration

Kentucky Welfare Reform Evaluation

Kentucky Welfare Reform Evaluation: Administrative Data Analysis

Leaving Welfare Behind: The Oklahoma TANF Leavers Report

Leaving Welfare: Findings From a Survey of Former New York City Welfare Recipients

Legislative Outcome Study

Lessons from Project Match's Longitudinal Tracking Data

Living with Welfare Reform: A Survey of Low Income Families in Illinois

Los Angeles County Post-TANF Tracking Project

Los Angeles Welfare Reform Monitoring Project

Maine Child Welfare Waiver Demonstration

Maryland Child Welfare Waiver Demonstration

Maryland Child Welfare Waiver Project – Managed Care and Services to Substance-Abusing Caretakers

Maryland Family Investment Program (FIP) Evaluation

Maximizing Job Opportunities for Welfare Recipients Through Expansion of Value-Added Industries in Economically Disadvantaged Rural Areas

Medicaid Managed Care Study

Medi-Cal Liaison Project

Michigan Assemblies Project

Michigan Child Welfare Waiver Demonstration

Minnesota Family Investment Program (MFIP) Longitudinal Study

Mississippi Child Welfare Waiver Demonstration

Missouri Welfare Reform Results Study

Monitoring the Impact of Welfare Reform on Immigrant Women, Infants, and Children: Access to Health Care, Health-Seeking Behaviors, and Health Outcomes

Montana Child Welfare Waiver Demonstration

Montana Welfare Reform Evaluation Project

Multiple Impacts of Welfare Reform in Utah: Experiences of Former Long-term Welfare Recipients

National Academy of Sciences Panel on Data and Methods for Measuring the Effects of Changes in Social Welfare Programs

National Study of Child Care for Low-Income Families Study

NCCP Child Care Research Partnership

Nebraska Employment First Program Evaluation

Nevada Welfare Reform Evaluation

New Hampshire Child Welfare Waiver Demonstration

New Immigrant Survey

New Mexico Child Welfare Waiver Project

New Mexico TANF Longitudinal Study

New Visions Evaluation

New York "Leavers" Project

New York Child Welfare Waiver Demonstration

North Carolina Child Welfare Waiver Demonstration

Ohio Child Welfare Waiver Demonstration

Oregon Child Welfare Waiver Demonstration

Oregon Families Who Left TANF or Food Stamps

Paternalistic Regulation of the Poor: An Exploration of Families Who Have Been Sanctioned Under TANF

Pennsylvania TANF Closed Case Telephone Survey

Process Evaluation of the Free to Grow Pilot Program, Head Start Partnerships to Promote Substance-Free Communities

Project for the Improvement of Child Support Litigation Technology

Psychiatric Disorders Among Low Income Single Mothers: Mothers' Well-Being Study

Quality Child Care in Portage County and W2

Reaching for Independence: Alaska Leavers Study

Retention Services in King County

Rural Impacts of Welfare Reform

Rural Welfare Reform Project: Does Welfare Reform Work in Rural America?

Rural Welfare to Work Strategies Project: Iowa

San Bernardino County (CA) TANF Recipients Study

San Mateo County "Leavers" Project

South Carolina Family Independence Program Process Evaluation

South Carolina Welfare and Food Stamp Leavers Study

South Carolina: State Welfare Reform Evaluation Program

State Tax Policy and Child Poverty in New Mexico

Study of Arizona Adults Leaving the Food Stamp Program

Study of Child Care Arrangements in New York City Neighborhoods

Study of Screening and Assessment in TANF/WtW

Study of the Employment Patterns of Young Women and the Implications for Welfare Mothers

Study of the TANF Application Process

Substance Abuse Research Demonstration

Survey of Former Family Independence Program Clients

Survey of Program Dynamics

Survey of the New Mexico Closed Case Recipients

Survey of Welfare Recipients Employed or Sanctioned for Non-Compliance

Texas Achieving Change for Texans (ACT) Welfare Reform Waiver Evaluation

Texas Child Care Utilization and Outcomes Study

Texas Child Welfare Waiver Project

Texas Families in Transition Study

The Annie E. Casey Foundation Rebuilding Communities Initiative

The Changing Face of Welfare in the 1990s

The Growing Crisis Among Wisconsin's Poorest Families: A Comparison of Welfare Caseload Declines and Trends in the State's Poverty Population

The W-2 Job Path: An Assessment of the Employment Trajectory of W-2 Participants in Milwaukee

The Welfare in Transition Project: Consequences for Women, Families, and Communities

Tracking Closed Cases Under The TANF Program in Massachusetts

Tracking Participants and Families Affected by Welfare Reform in Florida

Understanding Families with Multiple Barriers to Self-Sufficiency

Understanding the AFDC/TANF Child-Only Caseload

Utilization of Medi-Cal Services by Current and Former Foster Care Children

Virginia Closed-Case Study

Virginia Initiative for Employment Not Welfare

Walk-a-Mile Program

Washington Child Welfare Waiver Demonstration

Washington State Early Childhood Education Career Development Ladder

Washington State's Families After Welfare

Washington Work First Study

Welfare Graduates: College and Financial Independence

Welfare Reform and Community Development

Welfare Reform Commission's Longitudinal Database Study

Welfare Reform, the Economic and Health Status of Immigrants, and the Organizations that Serve Them

Welfare Reform's Impact on Food Stamp and Medicaid Participation

Welfare to Work: Monitoring the Impact of Welfare on American Indian Families

Welfare-to-Work Grants Program Evaluation

West Virginia Child Welfare Waiver Project

Wisconsin "Leavers" Project

Wisconsin Works (W-2) Program Evaluation

Wisconsin Works Child Support Waiver Demonstration

Work First New Jersey Evaluation

YouthBuild USA Welfare-to-Work Multi-Site Program

U.S. Department of Education
Office of Educational Research and Improvement (OERI)
National Library of Education (NLE)
Educational Resources Information Center (ERIC)

NOTICE

Reproduction Basis

X	This document is covered by a signed "Reproduction Release (Blanket)" form (on file within the ERIC system), encompassing all or classes of documents from its source organization and, therefore, does not require a "Specific Document" Release form.
	This document is Federally-funded, or carries its own permission to reproduce, or is otherwise in the public domain and, therefore, may be reproduced by ERIC without a signed Reproduction Release form (either "Specific Document" or "Blanket").